Seventy-eight Units of Permanent Housing Celebrated

May and June were busy months at Boley Centers with the grand opening of three facilities in St. Petersburg. Bob Pitts Villas (1007 Arlington Avenue N.), Burlington Gardens (3461 Burlington Avenue N.) and Twin Brooks Apartments (3450-3490 24th Avenue S.) introduced 78 units of permanent housing for individuals with disabilities, bringing Boley Centers' total number to 1,038.

Bob Pitts Villas marked the agency's first property certified as "green" by the National Association of Home Builders. The property provides 16 units and was named after Boley Centers' longtime Board Member, Bob Pitts. In addition to serving on Boley Centers' Board of Directors for 17 years, Bob is an active member of NAMI Pinellas and spends a lot of time volunteering at Vincent House and St. Peter's Episcopal Church. The property was constructed with funding from a HUD 811 grant and St. Petersburg HOME funds. Furnishings were donated through the Queen of Hearts.

Burlington Gardens was acquired and renovated with funds from the City of St. Petersburg's Neighborhood Stabilization Program. After the property underwent complete renovation, it now provides 20 units of permanent affordable housing.

Twin Brooks Apartments provides a total of 42 units, constructed in three phases. Construction was financed through HUD, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta through Synovus Bank, State of Florida Homeless Housing Assistance Grant; City of St. Petersburg; Pinellas Affordable Living, Inc. and Boley Centers, Inc. Furnishings were donated through HUD and the Boley Angels.

Boley Centers Awarded Collaborative Grant to Help Veterans

Boley Centers, Inc. and partner, Homeless Emergency Project, Inc. have been awarded a one year, $300,000 grant through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP) to help homeless Veterans return to the workforce. Of the 23 grants totaling $5,436,148 that were awarded nationwide, the grant awarded to Boley Centers and HEP was the only one in Florida. Boley is the lead recipient and will provide job placement services and HEP will provide outreach and case management.

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program brings together a variety of collaborating partners including the local Veterans Administration; the local Workforce Board, WorkNet Pinellas; homeless services and housing providers; employers; training institutions and apprenticeship programs. Multiple resources have been committed to develop a comprehensive system that removes barriers for participants by providing necessary housing, supportive services, educational...
Recovery Spotlight

Tina was recently able to put her tendency to become anxious aside so that she could talk to 30 or so Boley staff members and describe her journey from being an A student and a 14 month member of the U.S. Marines to being overcome by her mental illness. She described her experience with initially being jailed, living at tent city and finally coming to Boley where she has been able to feel safe and supported.

She is grateful for the Boley program where she is now working on learning new coping skills, understanding her illness and hopes to eventually start working again.

Summer Youth Intern Program (SYIP) Update

As Boley Centers' SYIP winds down for another year, we would like to thank the many businesses who provided jobs to our youth. Out of the 511 applications received, 141 interns were placed on jobs in the community: 35 in the public sector, which includes city facilities, and 106 in the private sector.

This year's partners included Sweetbay Supermarkets; St. Petersburg Housing Authority; Maher Chevrolet; Popeye's; Royal Theater; POPS, Inc.; Alegría Montessori; Stetson University; Bayfront Medical Center; Junior Achievement; Courtyard by Marriott; Magnuson Hotel Marina Cove; Operation PAR; Banyan Scapes; Urban League; Youth Arts Corps; Smith Funeral Home; Word of Life Fellowship; Dr. Frogue's Hair Salon; BET Solutions; Dr. J. Cedric Thornton; Poynter Institute; Bridges to Learning; Infinite Potential; Mt. Zion Human Services; Towne Place Suites; St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Wallace, Welch, & Willingham.
2011 Staff Awards

Congratulations to this year’s award winners!

Agency Employee of the Year - Kathy Cunningham
(pictured at right, with Gary MacMath)
Supervisor of the Year - Sharon Nivens
Esther Thorp Team Spirit Award - Curtis Anderson
Departmental Employees of the Year
Residential - Angela Levak
Vocational - Brenda Peters
Administration & Support Services - Kathy Cunningham
Community Services - Linda Johnson

Boley Centers’ Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) joined forces to persuade the City of St. Petersburg to install a flashing crosswalk at a very busy corner in St. Petersburg. At the January 2010 Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) meeting, Beverly C., a consumer at Bessie Boley Apartments, brought up a safety issue concerning the corner of 6th Street South and 34th Avenue South, adjacent to the Koenig Center Campus and Mosher Apartments. She said she had personally witnessed close calls while Boley consumers were trying to cross 6th Street at that intersection. She said that cars really pick up speed on that stretch of road and that it was “an accident waiting to happen.” She suggested the City put in a marked crosswalk with a flashing beacon at that location.

The staff advisor to the CAC sent an e-mail to the City Director of Transportation and the Council member for the district, following that up with phone calls and a letter describing this dangerous situation. After a few months, the covered bus stop was moved closer to the intersection. Knowing that this was not enough though, fifty six consumers from the Koenig Center campus wrote individual letters to Mayor Foster and the City Council asking for their help, and a petition was created and sent in. In April, 2011, one month after the letters and petition were delivered, a flashing beacon was installed and at least one consumer recently marveled “the cars really stop when it’s flashing!”

Newsflash!

"Boley Centers, Inc. is proud to partner with the Homeless Emergency Project, Inc. (HEP) to expand homeless services for our Veterans in Pinellas County," says Gary MacMath, Boley Centers’ President and CEO. "We share in the national concern that Veterans are returning from war and having an extremely difficult time finding employment within the present economic environment. This funding strengthens our ability to help men and women who have served our country and fallen to homelessness. Both Boley Centers and HEP already provide residential services for homeless Veterans. Adding employment services will help provide another component of care in their recovery."

To learn more about Boley Centers, go to www.boleycenters.org or call (727) 821-4819. To learn more about HEP, Inc., go to www.ethep.org or call (727) 442-9041.

"Grant Announcement" continued from cover
Special Events Recap

Earlier in the year, Boley Centers held its annual Black History Month Celebration for both staff and consumers at the Mary R. Koenig Center. The event celebrated the richness of the Black heritage within our country and the great contributions by well-known Black Americans. Entertainment included a steel drum performer, poetry readings and music by JD the Entertainer. The day concluded with a home-cooked meal prepared and served by staff!

Diane Winning hosted the Boley Angels’ Annual Wine & Cheese Membership event at her home on Friday, May 5, 2011. Angels old and new were present to enjoy an evening of good food, great wine and even better friends! The evening brought in new members to the guild which raises money to help support Boley Centers, particularly with furnishing apartments for consumers and helping to pay for some of their unfunded medical and dental needs.

Upcoming Agency Events

Boley Centers’ Annual Thanksgiving Feast
November 23, 2011
Mary R. Koenig Center

Boley Angels’ Annual Christmas Brunch
December 6, 2011
St. Petersburg Yacht Club

Boley Centers’ 29th Annual Jingle Bell Run
December 14, 2011
St. Petersburg Pier